**Black Death Newscast Project**

**Assignment Details:**

Students will create a newscast, using iMovie, that analyzes the effects of the Black Death and addresses the central question:

**To what extent should the government or local authorities be involved in a pandemic?**

* To what extent did the Black Death serve as an analogy to COVID-19?
* Should we look to the past for solutions to our current problems?

**Step 1: Historical Document Investigation – How did my group experience the Black Death?**

You will be divided into five heterogenous groups of 5-6 students representing an aspect of society that was greatly influenced by the Black Death. Each group will read documents to find out the impact the Black Death had on medieval European society in five categories. You are looking for what was happening and how did the Black Death change society in your assigned category. The groups will be:

* Economics (money, businesses, property, relations between buyer/seller)
* Medical (doctors, medicine, understanding of what causes illness)
* Political (power institutions, political groups, political structures)
* Religious (religious institutions, religious groups, religious structures
* Social/Cultural (values, beliefs, treatment of people, behavior, family)

Your group will be given a description sheet about their perspective with documents/excerpts to read. Also, you will be given scaffolding questions to help you reach conclusions. Assign in the expert groups 1-2 students to read one document for deep analysis and then have them share their insights with the expert group.

Your group is the only set of students reading the documents you have. Your responsibility is to know the information so you can share it with the rest of the class through a newscast. You need to know both the factual events surrounding how your assigned perspective was experiencing the Black Death and then explain the impact the Black Death had on your aspect of Medieval society (economy, politics, etc.) and how your group felt about the role the authorities were playing, which can be both positive and negative or both.

**Step 2: Newscast Creation: How was my group impacted by the BD?**

Using the information from your document set, you will create a newscast (like AJHS News) segment that presents facts about what was happening and the larger impacts of the Black Death on medieval society. Please use a checklist your teacher will provide to self-assess tyour progress.

**Newscast Roles:**

* Newscaster
  + Writes opening set-up to the newscast explaining the factual events and actions occurring because of the Black Death.
  + Writes a transitional scene between two “on sight” reporting scenes.
  + Writes a concluding script to wrap up and reiterate the major impacts of the BD on assigned group.
  + Coordinates with the reporters and characters to be sure the set-up is consistent with the “on sight” segments.
* Reporter (1-2 students)
  + Writes 2 “on sight” interview with 1-2 characters/witnesses to describe:
    - Facts of what is happening to people, businesses, groups, institutions as appropriate (what is happening?)
    - Describes impacts BD is having on assigned societal component (why does this matter?)
* Historical Actor (1-2 students)
  + Develops a “character” (either real from documents or made up based on documents) that was experiencing the Black Death
  + Works with the reporter(s) to write a script that portrays:
    - how historical character experienced the Black Death (what is happening to you?)
    - impacts the BD is having on your (why does this matter?)
* Director
  + Works with all members of the group and coordinates the newscast
    - handles the staging and movement of actors.
    - Works with all members of the group to ensure the newscast is accurate, cohesive, and explores multiple perspectives on the group’s focus.

**Step 3: Filming the Newscast**

Your newscast must include detailed information about the perspective, connected specifically to the Black Death. Students need to show all sides of the perspective and support their arguments with evidence. They are not stating their opinion, only presenting the arguments. There may be actions, beliefs, attitudes, and opinions shared in your documents you don’t personally agree with. You are playing a historical role and teaching us about the beliefs, actions, and feelings of people from the 14th century. Your job is to be historically accurate and teach us what was happening at that time (whether we agree with it or not).

Please be creative with setting your scene for the “on sight” interviews. Choose historical actors thoughtfully and with historical accuracy in mind. Make props as appropriate and speak in first person when acting.